

Eventually, as I moved somewhat closer to obtain better photographs, a car flushed all of the birds. The starling, which by now I felt quite certain must be a Rose-coloured Starling, was not seen again. I subsequently consulted several rangers at the camps, but none could help with the identification. Back in Sweden, I contacted Callan Cohen in Cape Town, who placed the photographs on the Birding Africa homepage and the bird was soon confirmed to be a Rose-coloured Starling. The brownish tone to the back suggests that it was probably a second calendar-year bird yet to attain full adult plumage (Cramp & Perrins 1994).

This is the first record of Rose-coloured Starling for southern Africa and only the second south of the Sahara, following one in Ethiopia c.4 months previously (Fry *et al.* 2000, Schollaert 2006), though the possibility that the bird was an escape cannot be eliminated, especially considering the unusual date of the record. More recently a third record, again from Ethiopia, concerned two birds in breeding plumage photographed amidst a flock of Wattled Starlings in Abiatta-Shalla Lakes National Park, in late April 2007 (R. Tizard in *Bull. ABC* 14: 222).

Acknowledgements

I thank Callan Cohen for placing the photographs on Birding Africa's homepage. Thanks also to David Fisher, Jeremy Lindsell, Mike Meidlinger, Killian Mullarney, Dick Newell, Georges Oliosio, Philip Whittington and Chris Wormwell for their valuable comments, and to Ron Demey for helping me draft this note.

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Received 20 October 2005; revision accepted 12 April 2008.

First record of Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* for The Gambia

Kevin Roy

Première mention de l'Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* pour la Gambie. Un Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* a été observé à Kulari Swamp (13°23'N 14°06'W), Upper River Division, Gambie, le 30 septembre 2006. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays, les mentions précédentes les plus proches provenant du Mont Nimba à la frontière entre la Guinée et le Liberia.

On 30 September 2006, at 12.30 hrs, whilst birding around Kulari Swamp (13°23'N 14°06'W), near my home in the Upper River Division of The Gambia, I observed a plain, dull-plumaged, sparrow-sized bird with an undulating flight and conspicuous white outer rectrices emerge from a dense savanna woodland and land, c.1 m above ground, in a *Mimosa pigra*, an invasive

prickly shrub, at the swamp edge. For 3–4 minutes it flitted between low perches in isolated specimens of those shrubs at a distance of 10–30 m, occasionally flicking and flaring its tail. It picked an insect from the ground and finally disappeared in the adjacent woodland, not to be seen again.

Initially I thought it was a Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*, a rare bird in the Upper River

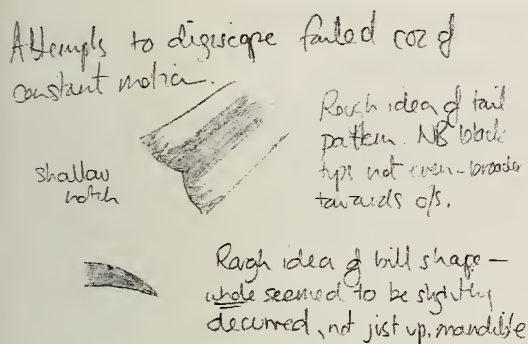


Figure 1. Sketch of Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus*, at Kuluri Swamp, Upper River Division, The Gambia, 30 September 2006 (Kevin Roy)

Croquis de l'Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus*, Kuluri Swamp, Upper River Division, Gambie, 30 septembre 2006 (Kevin Roy)

Division, but when I observed it with my telescope at 28× magnification it was immediately obvious this thought was incorrect, as the bill was slender, slightly decurved and entirely dark grey to blackish, whereas *I. minor* has a stubby, pink-based bill (Fry *et al.* 1988). Furthermore, the bird had a plain, all-grey head with no hint of the malar or loreal markings characteristic of *I. minor*. The tail was shallowly forked, with black central rectrices and black tips to the white outer rectrices, which were slightly broader on the outer webs (see Fig. 1). The legs were dark grey to blackish. Attempting in vain to obtain a digiscoped photograph, I failed to note any details for the rest of the plumage, which appeared rather nondescript greyish. The bird seemed to possess no obviously worn or damaged plumage.

On my return home I consulted Barlow *et al.* (1997), but could find no 'match' for the bird. However, using Borrow & Demey (2001), I identified it as a Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus*. The slender decurved bill suggested the bird was a *Prodotiscus* rather than an *Indicator* species, which supposition was supported by its active, rather erratic, flycatcher-like behaviour, undulating flight and the habit of flaring its tail (Fry *et al.* 1988). Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis*, of which there is a single record from

coastal northern Senegal (Barlow *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2001), has white outer rectrices, but these are all white, whereas those of the bird observed were tipped black. The only other similar-sized bird with white outertail-feathers known from The Gambia is Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*. This species, with which I am also familiar, is eliminated by its entirely white outer rectrices, white supra-loreal streak and eye-ring, and comparatively straight bill.

This is the first record of Wahlberg's Honeybird for The Gambia, the nearest previous records being from Mt. Nimba, on the Guinea-Liberia border (Fry *et al.* 1998, Borrow & Demey 2001). There are two isolated records in West Africa, from Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, as well as four records from Enugu in south-east Nigeria (Borrow & Demey 2001). The species' main range is in South and East Africa, with outlying populations in Sudan and Ethiopia, as well as in Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Clive Barlow for detailed comments on an earlier draft of this note, and for help with references. Thanks also to Ron Demey for helpful comments, to Tim Wachter for identifying *Mimosa pigra*, and to Pete Leonard for assistance with the graphics.

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Received 5 November 2007; revision accepted 15 April 2008.